

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Cam Shannon. I am from Yarmouth. I am on the board of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition. I am here today in support of LD 2283, An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public.

I will never forget when my son – at that time a toddler – woke from his nap red-faced and wheezing. He was crying, too, but I could tell from his color that he was okay. I called the pediatrician to make an appointment for later in the afternoon. When I got off the phone, though, my son was worse – working harder to breathe, gasping for air, and looking scared. Almost without thinking I grabbed Henry and ordered my shoeless daughter to jump in the car. My son was in crisis. I didn't have time to lose. We set out for the urgent care in town, but on the way, I was stopped by a red light. I looked all around – no oncoming cars – and decided I couldn't wait. I went through the redlight honking. Thankfully we got to the doctor safely and Henry got the steroid therapy he needed in time.

A crisis requires quick action to avoid tragedy.

In Maine we already have a yellow flag law that works well in certain circumstances, but it is cumbersome and time-consuming. It is not well suited to a crisis. Today I am here to join with the chorus of voices asking – begging – you to give Mainers a streamlined mechanism to protect our loved ones in crisis from harming themselves or others. We need a true extreme risk protection order to keep our family members and communities safe.

As outlined in the bill language, we need an extreme risk protection order that differs from the yellow flag process in three ways. First, it gives family members – not just law enforcement – the opportunity to seek help for a loved one in crisis. Second, it avoids the dangerous requirement that law enforcement take someone in crisis into custody. Third, it avoids the time-consuming, unnecessary, and resource-intensive medical evaluation requirement, instead allowing a judge to make a determination to temporarily remove firearms.

You have the opportunity to prevent future tragedies and save Maine lives. I urge you to vote ought to pass.